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The situation in the Middle East

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Letter dated 12 May 2003 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to draw your attention to the latest act of Palestinian terrorism perpetrated against the citizens of Israel.

Early yesterday morning, 11 May, Palestinian gunmen opened fire on an Israeli vehicle travelling just north of Jerusalem. The driver, Zion David, was returning home to his family from morning prayers. Palestinian gunmen shot Mr. David in the head. As a result of this terrorist ambush, Mr. David was killed. Eyewitnesses reported that shots were fired from both sides of the road towards Mr. David's vehicle. The gunmen also fired at another Israeli vehicle but no one was injured.

Mr. David left a wife and six children. Palestinians wounded one of his children, Avraham, in a separate shooting attack in January 2001 near Atarot, north of Jerusalem.

The al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, which is aligned with Chairman Arafat's Fatah movement, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Palestinian terrorists have also increased their indiscriminate rocket attacks on Israeli communities. Shortly after the ambush attack, Palestinian terrorists in the northern part of the Gaza Strip fired three Kassam rockets at the Negev town of Sderot. Two of these rockets landed in an open area, and the third rocket hit near the Sa'ad junction. On Friday 9 May, five Kassam rockets were fired at Sderot, resulting in a six-year-old girl suffering wounds to her hands.

These latest terrorist attacks are merely another attempt by Palestinian terrorists to target Israeli citizens. The continuing daily threat of Palestinian terrorism, deliberately aimed at the citizens of Israel, underscores the absolute necessity of Israel's preventive security measures.

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Israel holds the Palestinian leadership fully responsible for its failure to suppress and ongoing support of the campaign of terrorism, which continues to endanger the lives of both the Israeli and the Palestinian peoples. The fight against terrorism must be absolute, uncompromising and unrelenting. The aim is not to allow merely for a temporary cessation of terrorist activity, which would enable terrorist organizations to regroup and gather force, but the complete dismantling of the terrorist infrastructure, the arrest and prosecution of all terrorist operatives, and the confiscation and destruction of all illegal weapons.

Only once terrorism and incitement are fully and finally rejected as an acceptable tactic can we advance to a process of negotiations, which are the only means of achieving a genuine and lasting peace between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples.

I submit the present letter in follow-up to numerous letters detailing the campaign of Palestinian terrorism that began in September 2000, which document the criminal terrorist strategy for which the terrorists and their supporters must be held fully accountable.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 36 and 160, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ambassador Arye **Mekel**
Chargé d'affaires, a.i.